Tourism and Natura 2000

DI Thomas Knoll
Knoll · Planung & Beratung
Vienna, Austria
The situation in the alpine region

- A very high number and diversity of endangered and rare species
- High biodiversity due to different forms of land use and special regional traditions.
- Many protected areas for species requiring large habitats
- The alpine area is used by 120 Million annual visitors and is therefore one of the prime tourism and recreation areas in Europe.
- For many forms of nature based sport the alpine area provides ideal conditions.
The main objectives

Nature

- nature, several rare species and natural habitats of European significance
- high proportion of conservation areas, Natura 2000
- potential for conflicts between tourism and conservation also in Natura 2000 sites

Tourism

- most important leisure and recreation area in Europe
- more than 120 million tourists a year
- high economic potential

Conflict resolution by Natura 2000 Management plans
Natura 2000 and Tourism

- No or very basic knowledge and interest concerning Natura 2000 except those sites where conflicts with new plans occurred in the past.

- Main demand:
  - General information on the task of the directives
  - Operation under a continuation permit
  - Definition of deterioration
  - Role of management plans

- The management plan is seen as a tool to solve all kinds of existing conflicts (for example, also between different user groups). Its tasks are seen much broader as they have been defined in the Habitat-directive.
Challenge for landscape planning: An integrated approach for Natura 2000 Management plans

- The directive states clearly that the development and implementation of appropriate management measures also needs to consider economic, social and cultural concerns, as well as specific regional and local peculiarities (see Art. 2 Abs. 3 of the Habitat directive).
Such an integrated management approach needs to consist of four essential components:

✓ an integrated approach to inventory, and evaluation, as well as
✓ equal consideration of all current uses;
✓ the participation and education of all property owners and all other affected groups in a bottom-up type of planning process (including for example hunting, tourism, recreation and sport); and
✓ a sustainable approach to compensate property owners for any reductions, complications, or losses in their current uses, which in effect would lead to a system of conservation by contract.
Development of new facilities for activities depending on infrastructure

Examples: downhill skiing or golf.
Facilities can still be used
Visitors depend on this facilities
Management is easy
Facilities are limiting disturbing effects
Exception of this positive evaluation: impacts and disturbances in the surrounding area
A new Instrument: the FFH-assessment

- The FFH-assessment has to describe the likelihood of significant effects caused by projects and plans.
- For a lot of questions we need answers:
  - What is a likely significant effect?
  - How large are the areas which are to analyse
  - What is meant by cumulative impacts caused by other plans and projects?
Activities depending on special attributes of the landscape

The suitable areas for these sports are often very close to nature. Therefore these activities often are expected to get in conflict with the aims of the European directives.

Examples: climbing, canoeing.
The actual experiences in different mountain areas show that measures to solve the conflicts are needed, which correspond to the ecological requirements of the natural types and the species of community interest.
Activities without any special facilities

– In the opposite mostly each kind of landscape can be used for these activities like hiking, biking or horse riding.

– There could occur a deterioration or disturbance as well but it is less probable. Furthermore it is easier to find acceptable solutions and suitable measures.
Recreation and Tourism Concerns

- Impacts
  - E.g. disturbance
  - Destroyed vegetation
  - Relevant species
  - Number of visitors
  - Distribution during the day and season
  - Distribution of visitors
  - Activities of visitors

- Concerns
  - Relevance of the area for tourism
  - Touristic offers, services and infrastructure
  - Number of visitors (relevance)
  - Distribution of visitors (crowding)
  - Activities of visitors (attractivity)
  - Future development ...
The aim of the European network of protected areas, Natura 2000, is the conservation of the European natural heritage. The favourable conservation status of the habitats and species shall be ensured.

The aim of "AlpNaTour" is the integration of recreation and tourism concerns in NATURA 2000 management planning processes to support sustainability in the alpine area.

Within the Interreg III B-project AlpNaTour, the method of risk analysis was adapted to assess the risk of a deterioration of habitats and species due to touristic and recreational use. The results of the risk analysis show whether there is a high, medium or low risk for a future deterioration.
AlpNaTour - Project partners

Institute for Landscape Development, Recreation and Conservation Planning, BOKU - University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Austria

SLU, Company for Remote Sensing and Environmental Research, Germany

Institute of Surveying, Remote Sensing and Land Information, BOKU - University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Austria

Slovenian Forestry Institute, Slovenia

European Academy Bolzano (EURAC-Research), Italy

Provincial Government of Lower Austria, Austria
The process guided risk analysis - an analysis tool to enhance the efficiency of management planning

- The process guided risk analysis represents a cost effective tool for assessing the risk of the deterioration of protected habitats and the disturbance of protected species by tourism impacts. The focus of management planning is directed toward areas with a high risk of the impact.

- This method enables managers to identify urgent management needs and can be also applied in large sites.
The test site Ötscher-Dürrenstein was chosen to implement the first process guided risk analysis for tourism.

The risk analysis conducted for agriculture and forestry was further developed and adapted to tourism requirements.

The impacts of all tourism utilisations of the site will be examined and the risk of a violation of the habitats directive determined.
Recreation and tourism uses

The selected non-regulated recreation and tourism uses in the alpine space are:

- Diffuse movement in the landscape (walking, hiking, dog walking, collecting, jogging, Nordic walking)
- Cycling
- Mountain biking
- Riding
- Climbing
- Off-slope skiing
- Ski touring
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- Water sports (canoeing, kajaking, rafting, paddling and surfing, sailing)
- Bathing and diving
- Aviation (hang gliding/paragliding)
Procedure

Method: *moderated experts-workshop*

- High time economics
- Transparency of decision making utilising decision trees
- Comprehensible prioritising resulting in key projects
- Experts from the range of nature conservation and tourism
- Consensual decision-making process via moderation

Training programme

NATURA 2000
IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

Cyprus 30/05/2006 17
Procedure

- **3 factors** are evaluated to classify the risk by their combination:
  - **Sensitivity** of species and habitats towards different recreational activities (Indicators for the sensitivity are the conservation status and the relevance of the specific use for the habitats and species.)
  - **Use intensity** (use level)
  - **Probability of occurrence** of an overlay of tourism uses and protected species/habitats: temporally and spatially
Method

The process guided risk analysis is conducted by nature conservation and tourism experts. They define the risk each non-regulated recreation usage existing in the test site poses to each of the protected habitats and species of the test site →

1. Selection of tourism and nature conservation experts:

Tourism experts:
- regional managers,
- representatives of interest groups,
- representatives of alpine associations and authorities

Nature conservation experts:
- Persons from universities, authorities, civil engineers, technical offices and NGOs

Knowledge of the protected objects & site knowledge

Relation to recreation and tourism uses and to the leisure and tourism region
Method

2. Screening and evaluation of sensitivity

- Relation between use and impact of an protected object?
- If yes, evaluation of sensitivity

![Decision tree diagram](image)
3. Existence of uses and evaluation of use intensity

- Use in the area existing?
- If yes, evaluation of use intensity

Decision tree:
- Use in the site available
  - Yes
  - No
  - Use intensity
    - Zero
    - Low
    - Medium
    - High
  - 0
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
Method

3. Existence of uses and evaluation of use intensity

- 0 = no use
- 1 = <1 visitor/hectar/day (weakly visited)
- 2 = 1-10 visitor/hectar/day (medium strongly visited)
- 3 = >10 visitor/hectar/day (intensely visited)

Source: AMMER & PRÖBSTL (1991)
Method

3. Existence of uses and evaluation of use intensity

Apart from the visitor density the following factors are considered with the determination of the use intensity:

- Visitor density
- Seasonal characteristics/events
- Accessibility/route density
- Spreading degree/required surface
- Sights
- Natural conditions for use
- Average duration of stopover
- Weather dependence
- Used by tourists
- Used by residents
- Used by locals
- Recovery infrastructure
Method

4. Evaluation of occurrence probability

During the definition of the occurrence probability, factors used by the tourism experts to define the use intensity, are not be stated again.
Results

The results of the risk analysis show whether there is a high, medium or low risk for a future deterioration. The focus of management planning is directed toward areas with a high risk ➔ key projects.